

To: Stalcup, Dana[Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov]
From: Peterson, Mary
Sent: Thur 8/20/2015 5:38:12 PM
Subject: R7 assessment of work at mining sites

Dana,

I am providing this email as a follow up to our conversation this morning. In completing the template provided last week about work at mining sites, R7 took a very conservative approach in reporting an affirmative response to the question about whether large quantities of mine drainage could be released as a result of response activities, human activities, or meteorological conditions. We also noted in a separate column the conditions that could cause such a release. Specifically, we noted that an earthquake along the New Madrid fault could cause a release from large mine tailings piles that have a high water content. A seismic event such as an earthquake could cause a release (similar to a mudslide). However, normal site work around the piles involving heavy machinery would not be sufficient to cause a release. EPA's activities around these piles consists of capping the piles with soils removed from contaminated areas including residential yards. R7 believes this work should continue in order to address the human exposures to lead and other heavy metals.

R7 had planned to conduct work to shore up a dam at Rockford Beach as part of the SW Jefferson County NPL Site. The purpose of this action is to protect mussel habitat that could be impacted by a release of mine tailings currently contained by a dam structure in the river. R7 recently signed an Action Memo for this TC Removal Action. Even prior to the Gold King Mine release, R7 recognized the difficulties and potential vulnerabilities associated with construction on the dam, and had been consulting with the Corps of Engineers and state agencies. At this time, R7 plans to hold off on any construction pending a thorough vetting process and design with the Corps of Engineers.

R7 is currently assessing all of its activities at mine-related sites for the purpose of identifying any potential vulnerabilities. We believe this information will be useful in the Agency's internal review. We are paying particular attention to tailings dams and any potential impacts that could occur in the event of a release.

Mary P. Peterson, Director

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we clean up contaminated lands.
In a culture of teamwork and respect,
we are efficient, innovative, and fiscally responsible stewards of public trust."*